

5. (withdrawn): A photo mask blank which is prepared by the method according to claim 1.

6. (withdrawn): A photo mask which is prepared by using the photo mask blank according to claim 5.

7. (original): A method of reducing a stress of a film formed on a substrate, comprising the steps of:

disposing an ion generator in a chamber together with the substrate; and  
irradiating, onto the substrate during depositing the film, an ion generated by an ion generator to relax the stress in the film.

8. (currently amended): The method claimed in claim 7, further comprising the steps of:  
measuring a warp of the ~~transparent~~ substrate to define a warp amount;  
calculating the stress on the basis of the warp amount; and  
adjusting an irradiation condition with reference to the calculated stress so as to keep the stress into a predetermined range.

9. (original): The method claimed in claim 8, wherein the predetermined range falls within  $\pm 0.1 \mu\text{m}$ .

## REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-4 and 7-9 are rejected. Claims 5 and 6 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 2 and 8 have been amended.

### *Election/Restrictions*

The Examiner has requested an election between the inventions of Group I, containing claims 1-4 and 7-9 and being directed to a method of manufacturing a photomask blank, and Group II, containing claims 5 and 6 and being directed to a photomask blank. Applicant elected Group I for examination with traverse. Applicant respectfully submits that the invention of Group II is directly and exclusively limited to a product made by the process of claims 1 and 5, the method of Group I. When the Examiner searches the method, the Examiner must perform a complete search adequate to examine the invention of claims 5 and 6. All other substantive considerations that need to be evaluated for patentability of the claims in Group II would already

be considered in connection with the examination of Group I. There is no basis for subjecting the applicant to significant increased costs of separate examination and duplicate USPTO activity by requiring a separate application in this case.

### ***Drawings***

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because elements 2, 4 and 8 are not mentioned in the specification. Applicant has amended the specification to include reference to these components, all of which are known in the art. No new matter is added.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112***

Claims 2, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. This rejection is overcome by the amendments made to claims 2 and 8.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102***

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by US publication 2002/0197509 A1 to Carcia et al. This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Applicant has claimed priority from a Japanese Patent Application and has submitted a certified copy of the Japanese Patent Application, both of which have been acknowledged by the Examiner. Applicant is enclosing a certified translation of the corresponding Japanese Patent Application.

On the basis of this and the previous submissions, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw his/her rejection because the present U.S. application is based on the Japanese Patent Application in question.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

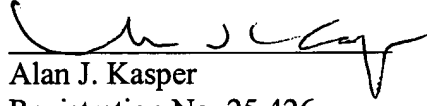
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WASHINGTON OFFICE

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